

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

**TELEPHONE ANSWERING SYSTEM WITH COURTESY GREETING  
SELECTABLE AFTER CALL IS RECEIVED**

5 A telephone answering system allows a recipient to  
spontaneously select a desired greeting after the phone  
has begun ringing to inform the caller that the call  
cannot be taken at this time and further providing an  
indication to either hold the line or when to expect a  
return call. A dedicated button is provided on the  
10 phone which, when pushed, selects a different greeting  
depending on the number of times the button is pushed.  
For example, if the recipient is interested in taking  
the call, but cannot at that particular instant,  
15 pressing the dedicated button one time will select a  
greeting like "Hold on a moment, I'll be right with  
you". For n presses, the selected greeting might be  
"I'm sorry, I can't pick up the phone right now, but  
please leave your number and I'll call back in ((n-1) x  
20 10) minutes." Knowing when they can expect a call back  
will increase the likelihood that the caller will make  
themselves available at the call back time and  
discourage phone tag.